THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The cash award has been announced as a token of appreciation for improving productivity through a considerable reduction of grounding time for major maintenance checks on A-320 aircraft carried out by the Engineering Department of Northern Region of Indian Airlines. Reduction of grounding period would load to better availability of aircraft and savings for the Airlines. 543 personnel from Engineering Department were covered under this award.

(c) and (d) No, Sir.

(e) and (f) The award was an incentive for higher productivity in Engineering Department. There are no grounds to pay this award to employees of other Departments.

Employment of foreign nationals

221. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether air taxi operators in India can employ foreign nationals despite availability of such skills/trades in India;

(b) if so, whether it is a requirement for such foreign nationals to obtain employment visa/ work permits before taking up jobs in India;

(c) if so, how many such job permits have been issued to foreigners in the past three years to work in civil aviation sector; and

(d) whether reciprocally an equal number of Indians were given permits in those countries for taking up employment in Civil Aviation?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) During the last 3 years 167 engineers of foreign nationality have been permitted to work on Indian registered aircraft operated by various Private Operators. Similarly, 154 flight crew licences of foreign pilots have been validated for various short periods.

(d) The Government have no information on this aspect.

Grant of special leave to Air India employees

2123. SHRI A. NALLASIVAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) how many employees of Air India owing allegiance to Air India employees guild have been granted special leave/ special casual leave during 1993 and 1994;

(b) the details of each employees availing such leave during the above period with reasons for such leave;

(c) the details for office bearers of the guild and other employees owing allegiance to the guild availing such leave;

(d) who are the authorities that are empowered to grant such leave and the authorities who have granted each of the above leave; and

(e) whether any employee in similar categories but not belonging to guild have been given such leave with details of number of employees etc.?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) to (c) 132 Air India employees owing allegiance to the Air India Employees Guild, including office bearers, were sanctioned special leave during 1993 and 1994. Detailed information except for Madras station is annexed as a statement (*see* below).

(d) Departmental Heads who are the competent authority to grant such leave, have delegated the powers, to their subordinate officers.

(e) No, Sir. This facility is extended only to the members of the recognised unions.